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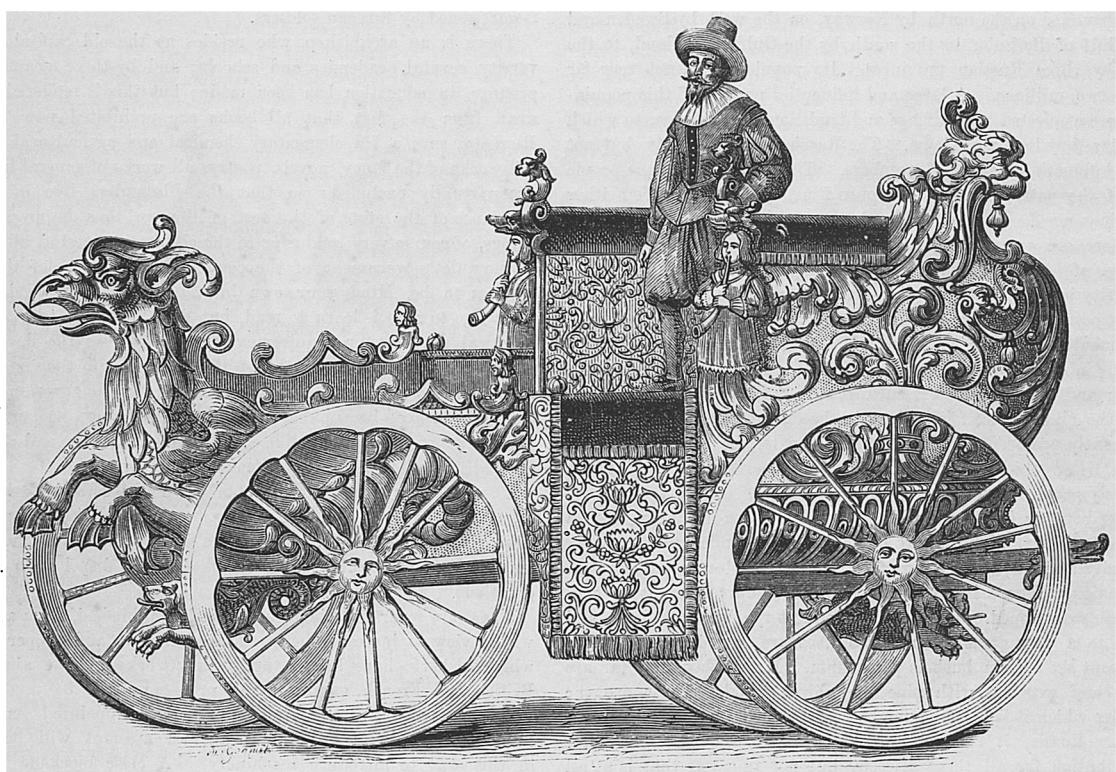
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GERMAN CHARIOT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THERE is scarcely any history more replete with interest or more rich in valuable instruction, than the history of invention and discovery. It is curious to trace the gradual advances which have been made from the rudest implements of barbarous times, to the complicated machinery of a highly civilised age, and to mark how the guesses and imperfect attempts of one period reappear in another, developed to a degree of perfection of which the originators had not the remotest conception. How striking, for instance, is the contrast between the steam-engine of the Marquis of Worcester, in the middle of the seventeenth century, and those now in use. Had the noble projector been told of the high state of perfection to which his invention would be brought in the middle of the nineteenth century, he would have rejected the idea as utterly absurd. A similar remark would apply to a thousand other cases of this sort.

The art of locomotion is one in which we have made greater progress than almost any other. Yet it cannot be said that the men of past ages failed for want of industry in attempting to improve.

In several special works upon the history of chariot building, and improvements in locomotion in the fifteenth and two following centuries, we find it stated that a mechanist of Nuremberg, named John Hanstsch, "made chariots which moved by a spring, and went two thousand paces an hour." We present our readers with an engraving of one of these singular vehicles from an old German plate. The person standing in the chariot is Hanstsch himself, driving, or rather conducting. In spite of much active research, we have not been able hitherto to ascertain with any degree of clearness or precision what kind of springs the skilful contriver employed. In all probability the mechanism was something like that of a watch or meat-jack, and required to be wound up at certain intervals. If so, the invention was more curious than useful. At any rate, we doubt not, our readers will be glad to see an exact representation of this curiosity, which persons properly qualified might find worthy of attentive consideration.



GERMAN CHARIOT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE KALMUCKS.

ON a former occasion* we furnished our readers with some particulars relative to the Kalmucks and their mode of life. It is, therefore, unnecessary for us now to enter into any minute detail on the subject. All that we propose to do, is to give some account of their religious customs, particularly their sacred festivals.

Like most of the Mongolian race, the Kalmucks are Buddhists, or rather Lamists; but their Buddhism is very much modified by the admixture of other notions and practices. They have a great number of idols, most of which assume the form of woman. They recognise one supreme God, to whom all other divinities, whether good or evil, are completely subject. They believe in the transmigration of souls, which they regard as affording a probationary course of discipline, more or less protracted, that every creature

must go through, before admission to the presence and society of the sovereign judge. The saints, with whom every Buddhist may aspire to be associated, will be recompensed by eternal repose and happiness, without sacrificing their individual existence.

The Kalmucks celebrate three great festivals every year, each lasting for a fortnight. The most important is that by which they celebrate the return of spring; the second takes place in June, and is devoted to the blessing of the waters; the third is the feast of the lamp, and is celebrated in December.

Bergmann has given an excellent description of the feast of spring called *zackan-zan*. Priests headed the procession, playing strange airs on large trumpets, such as are seen in our illustration. In the rear came persons carrying sacred chests, containing divine images, which they placed on an altar raised in the open air. Shortly after followed the Lama in a palanquin. He was set down

* Vol. iii. p. 236.